

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJ: PC CONVENTION RESULTS CAUSE SOME FRANCOPHONE
UNHAPPINESS

REF: OTTAWA 0694

1. PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE CONVENTION LAST WEEKEND PROVIDES EXCELLENT REMINDER OF DEPTH OF FRENCH/ENGLISH LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITIES IN CANADA. IT ALSO DEMONSTRATED THAT THIS SUBJECT DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO OBJECTIVITY. FACTS ARE FREQUENTLY QUITE IRRELEVANT IN FACE OF PERCEPTION.

2. FACTS OF PC CONVENTION, IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, SHOW REMARKABLE LACK OF ANTI-FRENCH CANADIAN BIAS FOR A PARTY WHICH HAS BEEN TRADITIONAL BASTION OF ANGLOPHONIA AND ITS PREJUDICES. NEARLY EVERY CANDIDATE TRIED AT LEAST SOME FRENCH, OFTEN WITH RESULTS WHICH MADE LOVERS OF THE LANGUAGE CRINGE. EVEN SINCLAIR STEVENS, AS UNILINGUAL AS THEY COME, TRIED A "JE SUIS CANADIEN." AND BOTH JACK HORNER AND JOHN DIEFENBAKER, WHO WERE ARDENT OPPONENTS OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, THREW THEIR SUPPORT TO FRANCOPHONE CLAUDE WAGNER. MORE THAN HALF OF WAGNER'S EVENTUAL SUPPORT, MOREOVER, CAME FROM ANGLOPHONE DELE-

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GATES AND HIS LOSS BY ONLY 65 VOTES IS CLOSEST FRANCOPHONE

HAS EVER COME TO WINNING PC LEADERSHIP. ONLY SIGNIFICANT AND POSSIBLE SIGN OF ANTI-FRENCH MOVE WAS WHEN SINCLAIR STEVENS, A RIGHT-WINGER, THREW HIS DLEGATE SUPPORT TO CLARK, A SO-CALLED "RED TORY", WHICH HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY SOME FRANCOPHONES AS MOVE BY STEVENS TO PREVENT AFRANCO-PHONE FROM BECOMING LEADER SINCE STEVENS' IDEOLOGICAL AFFINITY WOULD HAVE LED HIM TO SUPPORT WAGNER. EVEN THIS, HOWEVER, IS SUSPECT SINCE SOME INSIDERS CLAIM STEVENS' MOVE BASED ON PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT BUILT UP IN WORK-ING CLOSELY TOGETHER WITH CLARK IN COMMONS.

3. BUT FACTS ON THIS ISSUE ARE FREQUENTLY OBSCURED BY EMOTIONS, PRECONCEPTIONS, AND PERCEPTIONS. STRONG AND IN-FLUENTIAL ELEMENTS IN FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY ARE ALREADY CLAIMING THAT WAGNER WAS DONE IN BY PC ANGLOPHONES. ROCH LASALLE, ONE OF THE FOUR PC MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FROM QUEBEC, ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD NOT STAND FOR RE-ELECTION IN NEXT ELECTION BECAUSE OF PARTY'S FAILURE "TO GIVE A FRANCOPHONE A CHANCE TO BE LEADER OF THE PARTY." DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE EXONERATED ANGLPHONES FOR WAGNER DEFEAT, PLACING THIS RESPONSIBILITY ON QUEBECKERS WHO FAILED RALLY TO FELLOW-QUEBECKERS, HIS ANNOUNCEMENT WILL ADD FUEL TO THE ANGLO-FRANCO DIVISION IN THE PARTY. MAJORITY OF WAGNER SUPPORTERS LEFT CONVENTION HALL BEFORE CLARK GAVE HIS ACCEPTANCE SPEECH RIGHT AFTER LAST BALLOT. AND EVEN CLAUDE RYAN, RESPECT EDITOR OF LE DEVOIR, SUGGESTED IN EDITORIAL THAT PARTY DID NOT GIVE THE QUEBEC CANDIDATES (TWO OF WHOM, MULRONEY AND GRAFFTEY, ARE BILINGUAL ANGLOPHONES) FULL AND FAIR CONSIDERATION.

4. COMMENT: IN EMBASSY'S OPINION, THIS FRANCOPHONE DISGRUNTLEMENT INEVITABLE WITH ANYTHING SHORT OF WAGNER VICTORY. THIS IS SIMPLY A MEASURE OF EMOTIONAL CONTENT AND THE TENTIONS IN THE BICULTURAL SITUATION HERE. WE FAIRLY CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT JOE CLARK WILL BE ABLE TO SOOTHE AT LEAST SOME OF THESE FRANCOPHONE RUFFLED FEATHERS OVER TIME. HIS FRENCH IS NOT BAD AND IMPROVING AND HE APPEARS SINCERE IN HIS OVERTURES TO QUEBEC. BUILDING EVEN MODEST PC PRESENCE IN QUEBEC IS GOING TO BE TOUGH JOB BUT CLARK HAS EVIDENT EMPATHY FOR FRANCO-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HONES AND ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY IS HIS STRONG SUIT.
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